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TURBOCHARGING NETWORKS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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TURBOCHARGING NETWORKS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Summary

Networks have come to occupy a key position in the strategic armoury of the government, business and community sectors and now have impact on a broad array of policy and management arenas. An emphasis on relationships, trust and mutuality mean that networks function on a different operating logic to the conventional processes of government and business. It is therefore important that organizational members of networks are able to adopt the skills and culture necessary to operate successfully under these distinctive kinds of arrangements. Because networks function from a different operational logic to traditional bureaucracies, public sector organizations may experience difficulties in adapting to networked arrangements. Networks are formed to address a variety of social problems or meet capability gaps within organizations. As such they are often under pressure to quickly produce measurable outcomes and need to form rapidly and come to full operation quickly. This paper presents a theoretical exploration of how diverse types of networks are required for different management and policy situations and draws on a set of public sector case studies to understand/demonstrate how these various types of networked arrangements may be 'turbo-charged' so that they more quickly adopt the characteristics necessary to deliver required outcomes.

TURBOCHARGING NETWORKS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Introduction

It is widely agreed that society has entered an era of more intensely or wide ranging forms of networked organisations (O'Toole, 1997; Agranoff, 2003; Provan and Milward, 2001; Stewart, 2002; Castles, 1996). Moreover, as O'Toole (1997: 46) and others (Considine, 2000; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001 a& b) indicate, this reliance on networks and hybrid derivatives of networked governance arrangements is likely to be ongoing and deliberate. Both public and private sector organisations have employed significant resources and funding into the implementation of these alternative forms of organising, managing and working.

For public sector organisations, the shift from traditional bureaucracies governed by stringent guidelines and hierarchical rule to networks reliant on relationships, trust and mutuality is significant. It has been demonstrated that different types of networks and different levels of relationships require different strategies and that the purpose and type of network sought determines the method of formation (Brown and Keast, 2003; Mandell and Steelman, 2003). Using multiple case studies, this paper further investigates the formation and operation of various types of networks.

As networks come increasingly to the fore as significant forms of organisation and operation, the reliance on achieving improved services and governance arrangements has intensified. In this way, achieving well functioning networked arrangements to deliver services and policy often becomes a high priority. An issue identified in this research is that networks often need to form rapidly to address immediate public policy and management issues. However, trust and cooperation, the essential elements of successful networks, usually take significant time to develop. In public sector organisations accustomed to bureaucratic control mechanisms, the rapid establishment of trust and true cooperation appears particularly problematic. This paper therefore considers the means by which networks may be 'turbo-charged' and uses the findings from the case studies to demonstrate how different network types may capture considerable synergistic benefits from these concerted efforts.

Background

Networked arrangements have come to the fore because changing social, economic and political conditions across the public, private and voluntary sectors have exposed the limitations of both conventional bureaucratic and market-oriented forms of social organisation. Networks, networked ways of working and associated relational institutional arrangements have emerged to offer these sectors a way of value adding and transforming existing policy, product and service delivery models. Networks provide many advantages over conventional models of social and economic organisation in terms of their flexibility, adaptability, ability to integrate disparate players and resources and provide a mechanism for creative problem solving (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000; Kickert et al, 1997; Brown and Keast, 2003).

Within the business arena, networks provide a way for businesses to tap into the 'window of their partners' broad capabilities' (Inkpin, 1996: 123) and, in doing so, secure maximum productivity, innovation and profit (Powell, 1990; Sagawa and

Segal, 2000). Within the public policy arena, networked arrangements also offer the higher-order prospect of solving complex social problems such as social disadvantage, poor education and health outcomes, welfare dependency and environmental degradation that defy conventional single agency or single sector responses to their resolution and continue to plague society despite concerted efforts (Clarke and Stewart, 1997; Huxham, 2000). Finally, in the community sector, networks facilitate community engagement by linking into micro-communities to achieve improved decision-making and community participation and build community capacity. As a consequence, networked arrangements in all sectors may offer enhanced learning capabilities and consensus building processes that are considered necessary for innovation, creativity and constructive outcomes and create public value (Huxham, 2000; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001b).

In view of these varying contexts and purposes, networked arrangements have come to comprise many forms and are increasingly prevalent structural arrangements across all sectors (Agranoff, 2003; Brown and Keast, 2003; Mandell and Steelman, 2003). While network forms are diverse, it is suggested different network types may be matched to particular outcomes and purposes.

Networks and Managing Relationships

Networks form through the ongoing relationships established between different constellations of individuals working together within an organisation and across traditional organisational boundaries and increasingly, across sectors (Kickert, et al 1997; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001b; Sydow, 2003). The emphasis is a shift in orientation from autonomous and independent operations and loose even competitive relationships to more interdependent and closely interconnected relationships.

With a focus on trust, reciprocity and the achievement of mutual gains, networked arrangements require a shift from conventional hierarchical authority to processes and operational arrangements that are more horizontal, equalitarian and relational in their orientation (Rhodes, 1996; Chisholm, 1996; Ansell, 2000). Because they are based on a different operating logic networks necessitate more than a 'business as usual' approach and require close and deliberate attention to relationship building, maintenance and leveraging (Agranoff, 2003; Mandell and Steelman, 2003; Keast, Mandell, Brown and Woolcock, 2004).

In this way a key task in network management is the ability to mould and manage relationships to achieve desired outcomes (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000; 2004; Keast, Mandell and Brown, 2005). The ability to mould and manage network relationships has been hindered by a tendency to treat networks as undifferentiated, ignoring the different strengths of relationships and connections required to produce outcomes (Brown and Keast, 2003).

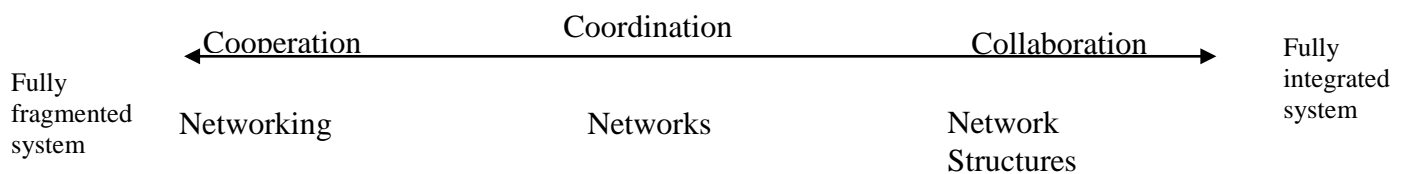
Networks have been treated as undifferentiated; however, increasingly research in this arena is uncovering the scope and variety of networked arrangements and indicates a level of complexity and fine distinctions in terms of operational structure, relational arrangements and purpose (Agranoff, 2003; Brown and Keast, 2003). Working in networked arrangements create a new type of operational and management regime. In order to build, maintain and sustain successful networks, policy and programmatic approaches require careful consideration of strategic intent. Network members need to

be cognizant of different levels and intensity of relationships and activities required to achieve optimal operation, management and outcomes.

Differentiating Networked Relationships

A relationship, by definition is a bond or connection between individuals. Different terms or categories have been used to denote the different types of relationships that can occur between people, organisations or sectors. With respect to horizontal inter-organisational relationships a compendium of terms has developed of which the following three main horizontal integration relationships have been distilled from the literature – cooperation, coordination and collaboration and linked to related networked structures – networking, networks and network structure (Brown and Keast, 2003). These three horizontal relationships and their associated network structures are located on a continuum ranging from loose connections to highly integrated arrangements as depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Horizontal Relationship and Networked Arrangements



Each of these relationships and their core components is now briefly discussed.

Cooperation refers to the formation of generally short term, often informal and largely voluntary relations between organisational entities. In cooperative relationships participants may agree to share information, space (co-location), or referrals, however no effort is made to establish common goals and each agency remains separate, retaining their own autonomy and resources. The emphasis at this relationship level is on simply taking others into account and being accommodating without necessarily adjusting individual goals. Because they are low risk endeavours, a high level of trust is not a necessary requirement for participation. As such cooperative relationships generally can develop quickly and do not entail a high maintenance element, usually relying on thin and infrequent communication process. Since cooperative relationships only really require the development of loose links and lower level of actor intensity and mutuality they are equated with ‘networking’.

Coordination occurs where there is a need to align resources and orchestrate efforts in order to achieve a predetermined goal. In this way coordination is not dependent on the good will of different actors but rather has some force of mandate or objective. Since coordination moves beyond information sharing to joint action and planning, it requires a higher level of commitment as well as the agreed loss of some autonomy. The need to give over some organizational autonomy to another project or organization means that coordination relationships require a higher-level trust from participants that collective goals will be achieved and that their own individual needs also met. The need to establish roles and firmer relationships and come to a point of

common agreement about outcomes and processes can be time consuming, often requiring a number of sessions before agreement is reached. The tangibility of processes makes coordination a much more visible and formal relationship than cooperation. More formalized structures and administrative arrangements coupled with closer connections (but not to the level of collaboration) links coordination relationships with networks (Brown and Keast, 2003). The potential for an external mandate to drive network formation and operation locates coordination at the fulcrum between horizontal and vertical integration relationships (Matheson, 2000; Keast, 2004).

Located at the far end of the relationship continuum and characterized by more intense relationships, higher levels of trust, and mutually developed visions and processes, *collaboration* is usually the most stable and enduring of the relationships. The requirement for high-level trust means that collaboration can be a time consuming process. Indeed, work by Annie Cassidy Foundation and other researchers estimate that collaboration often requires at least three years of relationship effort (Mandell, 2000; Keast et al, 2004). Further, collaborative working can be a highly risky behaviour as its success depends on members being committed to a common mission, establishing common language and being prepared to work in new ways (Mandel and Steelman, 2003). The dense interconnections and higher level of interdependency demonstrated in collaborative arrangements associates it with network structures (Mandell, 2000; Brown and Keast, 2003; Keast et al, 2004).

Specifying Network Relationship Aspects

This review indicates that each of the relationship types and their associated network arrangements exhibit different characteristics, require different levels of trust and time to develop and meet different purposes (Brown and Keast, 2003; Mandell and Steelman, 2003). Table 1 provides a summary of these differences.

Table 1: Summarising Relational Aspects

Relationship/ Network Type	Characteristics	Linkage strength	Time Required	Purpose
Cooperation/ Networking	Independent focus; Information sharing; Low trust, low risk, Low rewards Thin & infrequent personal communication media Low stability	loose linkages;	Low time requirement, quick to establish	Accommodating & adjusting Reduce duplication & overlap
Coordination/ Network	Some autonomy given over Aligned resources, goals and plans Formalised, impersonal communication, more frequent Medium degree of stability	Medium linkage strength; Increased density at core	Medium time required to establish; medium level of time for maintenance Time commitment mostly to coordinator	Integrate services, Maximise resources and ensure set outcomes
Collaboration/ Network Structure	Interdependent High trust; high risk Thick & personal communication/media High stability	Tight/dense linkages	Longer time for formation; high time commitment for maintenance	System change

Clearly then, depending on the type of outcome required, a different type of relationship is formed and operationalised. The further the relationship type is along the relationship continuum towards interdependence and tightly connected relations the greater the effort and time is required for establishment and maintenance.

Governments are currently looking to capitalise on and leverage off the inherent benefits of network-based relationships in order to better meet their responsibilities (Osborne and McLaughlan, 2002; Brown and Keast, 2005 forthcoming). While this is a relevant strategy, there has been a tendency to ignore or fail to understand the differences between the various network types and their associated relationship styles, or use them as merely political rhetoric thus limiting the effectiveness of the intervention (Brown and Keast, 2003). Governments worldwide are under to pressure to implement a change in their ways of working from conventional hierarchical and directive approaches to a more relational orientation. However, changing administrative and organisational structures, building relationships and establishing trust can take substantial time (Mandell, 2000; 2001; Keast et al, 2004). This aspect presents problems to the traditional bureaucratic structures and the management capacity and cultures of public sector organisations as time may not be available to let the relationships ‘run their course’ over the longer period required to consolidate the

trust and reciprocity needed for building appropriate networked arrangements. Particularly in cases where immediacy of response to a public issue is paramount, the fast formation of networks and the expeditious development of relationships are required. Despite the reality of this situation, few studies have considered network relationships or, in particular, how network relationships may be fast-tracked or turbo-charged to meet service goals.

Examining Relationship Building Strategies: Methodology and Cases

A multiple case study approach has been used as the principal research method for this examination of networks and their relationship building strategies. The intent is to explore the purpose of the networks and the strategic relationship development strategies employed. Three public sector networked arrangements, each with a stated role and emphasis on new ways of working based on enhanced relationships were selected as the units of analysis for this review. The cases were drawn from the human services arena. The responses to changing need and complex social issues are often sharpest in this sector and thus the evidence and effect of turbo-charging efforts may be found with the appropriate variation of relationship and network style but consistency in setting. In order to distil the nuances or subtleties of the networks in terms of their formation, operation and relational aspects the selected networks were located at different levels of operation – whole of government policy and program development, regional managerial and community/practitioner.

The first case study examined is the Chief Executive Officer's Committee. In recognition of the need for both horizontal and vertical integration at the highest levels of the public service and to facilitate enhanced service delivery in the human services arena, CEO's was established in 1998 to provide support to the Human Services Cabinet Committee. This initial body comprised ten government departments with broad responsibility for human service policy and delivery. Its operational charter centred on bringing the collective knowledge and influence of Chief Executive Officers to bear on key policy issues within the human services arena. As such, the CEO's had a particular focus on developing a coherent policy and service delivery framework fostering a whole of government thinking approach that had the potential to link government agencies in the human services sector (O'Farrell, 2002; Interview 8 May 2002).

The Goodna Services Integration Project (SIP) was formed as a response by human service practitioners, particularly including the Regional Managers of state and federal government departments, Ipswich City Council representatives and the University of Queensland, to a local crisis for which all service providers had some responsibility (Keast et al, 2004). The incident itself, combined with the fact that the Goodna district has been subject to considerable ongoing intervention by both government and local services and over time has been the recipient of substantial amounts of government funds from various sources, brought to attention the region's escalating problems and the failure of agencies to deal with those problems and highlighted the need for immediate systems change. In response to the perceived 'crisis' came the realization that each of the concerned agencies could no longer work alone (Woolcock and Boorman 2003, 9). Consequently, the SIP was created and brought together these core agencies as well as local community agencies and communities, to better respond to the needs of the community for integrated service

delivery while providing a range of activities and services to improve the community's capacity to respond to social issues.

The final case study is the Family and Youth Connections Network (FYC). The FYC was established as an integrated service model to reducing youth homelessness among young people aged 12 to 18 years. FYC's primary objective centres on bringing together the full set of service providers in the Gold Coast region (twenty-seven agencies) involved in the provision of services and support to young homeless people and their families in order to provide a seamless service model for this client grouping.

In building the case studies qualitative data gathering instruments were utilised with forty semi-structured interviews and four focus groups undertaken to develop a comprehensive understanding of the different cases. Targeting network members and key network informants as data sources enabled the interviews and focus groups to uncover the nature and strength of the suite of relationships between network members and their perception of the effects of these relationships as well as identify strategies used to enhance relationships.

Findings

The findings from the three case studies all demonstrated aspects of turbo-charging activities to enhance relationships as part of a deliberative strategy to respond to a volatile service environment, the push for new 'more horizontal ways' of working or a crisis situation. In addition, the first case study demonstrates how top-down coercive strategies may combine with more horizontal modes to achieve the traction necessary to make the shift in orientation from a single agency to whole-of-government approach.

Chief Executive Officers Human Services' Committee

Although termed a 'committee' and demonstrating aspects of this institutional arrangement including being an appointed body, the CEOs Human Services Committee also exhibited features of a network, particularly in its second iteration. The growing interpersonal relationships and increased professional understanding were also central aspects linking this collective of Directors Generals and CEOs. However, despite being formed to secure cross-department policy and program coordination, the initial version was limited to networking based largely on cooperative relations of shared information. Growing pressure for a stronger whole-of-government approach by the Queensland Premier resulted in the introduction of more stringent operating requirements, tighter linkage to the authority of Cabinet and therefore a stronger mandate for coordinated action and the use of tighter administrative components such as reporting schedules and structured plans. On this shift it was noted:

I suspect and believe they have become more targeted and formalised in their operations – having plans and timelines for action and designated leaders around areas of responsibility ... Because of its strong links to Cabinet it has gained a higher priority and greater legitimacy (Interview 21 January, 2002).

In addition to this authoritative approach to tightening relationships, there was a deliberative effort to enhance interpersonal relationships between committee members.

Certainly there are much better relationships ... There is a much better understanding of each others' business through participating in this network and that has led to stronger relationships between people and a greater trust to be able to work together (Interview 19 December 2002).

The more traditional relationship building mechanisms of meetings, workshops and 'love-ins' were supplemented by the requirement for CEOs to attend weekend Community Cabinet Forums in rural regions. The unintended consequence of this requirement was that CEOs were presented with the opportunity to spend protracted time together learning about each other and their service portfolio. Specifically it was stated:

I think the Community Cabinet Meeting would actually be the biggest unintended benefit in that there is a much better relationships generated by the Chief executive Officers by the fact that we all come together ... to listen to what the community has got to say. We all go to the Chief Executive Officers' dinner and all that sort of stuff ... It's been very good because there has been a dialogue and a shared understanding of what it means to be in the Queensland government and I think that has been very, very good. I don't think that it was specifically intended or planned. It just emerged through the Premier's decision that all Directors' General were to attend the Community Cabinet meetings (Interview, 22 January 2002).

This review has demonstrated that through a deliberative decision to increase the relationships between human service organisations based on mandate, vertical authority and more structured linkages and greater, if more controlled interactions, coupled with the unintended effect of the relationship building opportunities presented by the Community Cabinet process, the CEOs Committee was able to make the shift from a body that was mostly cooperating to a more coordinated approach to policy and program development and implementation.

The impact of this mix of horizontal relationship building, coupled with a formalised structured and vertically aligned approach to whole-of-government integration has been the achievement of some crosscutting initiatives that move beyond narrow section achievements to produce broader gains for the whole public sector, which may not have been possible by staying in the networking and cooperation mode. The speed at which this more directive, systematic and integrated approach was formulated and implemented was a key factor in bringing the network to a successful programmatic outcome.

Services Integration Project (SIP) Goodna

As a regional initiative, SIP Goodna was looking for integration around policy and service delivery, bringing the community into decision-making, utilizing resources and creative solutions and sustainability.

To move beyond 'business as usual' and concentrate on bringing together the fragmented and often competitive service providers the need for concerted relationship building was recognised early in the SIP process (Interview 27 November 2001). Indeed, it was stressed that if SIP were to be genuinely different, participants would need to make an earnest attempt to build relationships and learn from each other (Boorman and Woolcock, 2002). However, it was acknowledged this imperative would not be an easy task because of the poor prior relationships, lack of mutual service orientation and the low level of trust experienced between service agencies in this region.

As a way to overcome these 'entrenched positions' and establish enhanced relationships necessary for a collaborative network and capitalise on the collective capacities of the project team a Graduate Certificate in Social Sciences (Inter-professional Leadership) was developed (Interview 7 February 2002). The rationale for the Graduate Certificate Course acting as an instrument for cohesion is set out below:

At the commencement of the course some members were very prickly. There was a wide range of players – many of who did not share a common language, common training or even common experiences as Regional Managers. Although they were mostly an older and more experienced group of people, they had not all progressed through the public service in similar ways, had different experiences, backgrounds and ideologies. It was vital to develop a skill set, a language and a common vision for them to move forward as one (Interview 27 November 2001).

In this course SIP participants spent 16 full days over two semesters learning new theories, unlearning old behaviour, learning shared language and skills sets and progressing the design and delivery of a SIP (Interview, 27 November 2001; Boorman and Woolcock, 2002:12). A respondent described the Graduate Certificate as follows:

Its basis was action learning and practices of reflection. The process of learning and the content was about collaborative skills and applying those skills to the program ... By the end of the course it was unclear to us which was the real project and which was the learning experience (Interview 5 August, 2002).

In their responses SIP participants frequently attributed the relationships developed through the Graduate Certificate as underpinning and facilitating the operation of the project. As one respondent commented:

Through the Graduate Certificate and the meeting processes, we have been able to gain a more 'holistic' picture of each other and our departments and their needs and limitation. This has helped us

to break down the silos at least in relation to this project and hopefully others (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

For most SIP members their participation in the Graduate Certificate was a definitive (and defining) aspect of their experience in the program and central to the progression to a collaborative mode of working. The relationships and trust forged during this experience was described as “the glue that bound the group together”. On this integrative effect the Graduate Certificate course was further identified as an: “important aspect for building harmony, emphasising the same values and getting commitment to joint action” (SIP Focus Group respondent, 11 October 2001). Through the ongoing mutual learning and the close interpersonal experiences it engendered it could be said that the Graduate Certificate effectively ‘short circuited or turbo charged’ the relationship building process for SIP and enabled members to quickly move into collaborative action.

Having been in the trenches together, so to speak, and sharing the same experiences and learning a common language we were more than colleagues, we had gone way beyond that. We had broken down the barriers and had greater trust and regard for each other and therefore our collective organisations (SIP Post Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

The tight interpersonal connections between SIP members forged through participation in the Graduate Certificate course as well as from ongoing interaction and the use of a relationship facilitator enabled the collaborative relationship level necessary to steer SIP away from merely ‘business as usual’.

Family and Youth Connections Network

The Family and Youth Connections Network (FYC) is a community-government initiative based on the ideals of a community network. With a focus on addressing service duplication and securing a seamless model of intervention through shared resources and programs, the program sought a coordination relationship between members. This coordination goal was confounded by a policy discourse and funding agenda that promoted collaboration. Further, as one respondent noted there was not “clear understanding of what was meant by collaboration or how it could be achieved just that it was somehow better and should be the goal”(Interview 4 July, 2003).

Regardless of the lack of understanding of the different levels of relationship and their related outcomes, network members were aware that bringing such a diverse set of organisations together into a collective or network type of arrangement would depend on the formation of improved relationships between agencies. As one member described the situation: “We knew that relationship building was central to the network’s operation and especially to achieve the change and outcomes” (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001). However, it was acknowledged that these agencies had been, if not outright competitors for funds, then at least there had been a reluctance to move beyond fairly superficial ways of working together. One respondent described the initiative as existing in the “simultaneous situation of competition and cooperation often characteristic of community agencies’ relationships (Interview 14 May 2003).

In view of this desire or mandate to 'work better together' the newly formed body based its operation on forming tight integration relationships between agencies. It was quickly apparent however that despite the desire for a more integrated mode of service delivery many of the agencies were not prepared, or able, to go this far. The following statement highlights this problem:

On formation and without clarification of our goals we went straight into forming tight integration through formal relationships and centralised authority. This did not work well as we had no common purpose or goals and no real trust. Consequently we had to take a step back to form better relationships and trust before we could move forward again (Interview 20 February 2002).

It was recognised that with a limited history or experience in working together, few existing relationships between the organisations and limited trust, it was necessary to spend time learning about each others' organisation and their operation and building more effective relationships. It was acknowledged: "We are probably more cooperative than collaborative". The need to take time to build relationships and trust was apparent in the following statement:

We tried to bring things together in a bit more formalised way, but people were not there, they were not in the space necessary for that type of relationship or commitment. The network was just not in the position to do anything more than meet and share information. So we had to review things and say 'let's take this one step at a time' 'lets spend some time building more relationships before we try to tie things down' (Interview 14 July, 2002).

The relationship building process to advance along the network/relationship continuum took place and was facilitated around a regular schedule of network meetings as well as a succession of workshops focused on determining the agreed direction the network could take and beginning to develop joint plans. There was a deliberate effort made to focus on learning more about each other's organisations and understanding their issues and where there were overlaps and differences. Relationship building was further enhanced through the closer casework arrangements network members became involved in as part of their commitment to the network service model. As a result of these processes it was claimed that: "there is shared commitment and shared understanding and stronger relationships" (Interview 4 July 2002). The network also used brokerage funds as "a tool to encourage partnerships and enhance relationships" (Interview 4 September, 2003).

Ongoing developments within the network have led to the achievement of stronger relationships necessary for a coordination network as evidenced by the establishment of joint programs, pooled resources and funding practices and the co-location of three services within the main office facility. Supplementing this has been the introduction of more formalised administrative requirements and structured processes for decision-making arising from incorporation. As a result these processes pitched at the right level of relationship, FYC has been able to meet its stated goals for a coordinated service delivery network.

Table 2: Summary of Relationship Enhancing Strategies

Case	Focus	Type of Relationship sought	Type of relationship in place	Ramping up Strategies/actions
Chief Executive Officers	Whole-of-government	Coordination	Cooperation	Introduction of mandate Community Cabinet week-ends (enhanced and 'close' contact)
Services Integration Project	Regional service integration	Collaboration	Ad hoc cooperation, competition	Graduate Certificate Intensive relationship building Relationship facilitator
Family & Youth Connections	Service integration	Collaboration	Competition/cooperation	Facilitation Workshops Co-location Brokerage funds

DISCUSSION

A key aspect then in the implementation and management of successful networks is to mix and match the strength of the relationship with the identified purpose or required outcome (Brown and Keast, 2003; Mandell and Steelman, 2003). The need to mix and match is exemplified in the following statements:

It's about knowing what [relationship] to use at what time and what things you have in your tool box. And the tools need to change depending on the nature of the issues or problems that you are dealing with (Interview, 3 September 2002).

and

The issue as I have concluded is that it is not either/or, but rather the appropriate match and mix [of relationships]. Sometimes you need to use collaboration ...when you are really clear about what needs to be negotiated and that only a collaborative effort will achieve endpoints ... but sometimes it only requires coordination and to tell people they are actually going to pursue this line for these purposes (Interview, July 2002).

To expand if all that is required is sharing of information and mutual adjustment, then cooperative efforts based on relationships that are informal, loose and generally low in trust and risk and accompanied by infrequent and thin communication processes will be successful and sufficient. However, where the alignment of resources and activities across government so that joint effort is achieved while retaining a level of autonomy, then a more formalised coordination relationship underpinned by a medium level of trust and more structured processes and more frequent and detailed communication will be the appropriate form. Finally, if the problems are so intractable and the resources diverse that working as usual is not effective or systems change based on tight, interdependent relationships is required, then collaboration though a network structure may be necessary.

Turbo-Charging Relationships

There will be times and incidents however when the original intervention needs to ramp-up to another level of activity and commitment in order to achieve goals. In many cases this ramping-up process will be achieved through the normal progress of time, consolidation of commitment and the evolution of the relationships. However, for some incidents the situation is so critical or existing ways of working are not achieving desired outcomes there is a need to quickly move to the next level of operation or change from conventional systems of working to a networked form. The findings from these case studies demonstrate that network relationships can be turbo-charged to reach required levels of intensity, trust and commitment.

While most of these strategies fall within the horizontal domain and centre on building and facilitating opportunities and structures for network actors to ‘step into each others shoes’ and establish enhanced personal rapport, trust and commitment, the case study findings also indicate that vertical relationships and associated mechanisms can be used to turbo charge relationship and that this appears most successful when there is an imperative to get to more advanced relationships. While top down, coercive effort may be required to shift to the new ways of working, such initiatives will require careful managing and monitoring since the on-going relationship focus of networked arrangements works against a ‘command and control’ focus.

Drawing from the case study findings and broader network and inter-organisational literature a suite of relationship turbo-changing/ramping up strategies and structures has been identified. Some of these are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Turbo-Charging Strategies

Relationship	Processes and Structures
Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Informal directed meetings “not just cups of tea”○ Facilitated Workshops○ Thicker and more frequent communication○ Setting up project-oriented email groups
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Co-location,○ Scheduled, formalised and directed meetings○ Direction-setting & specialist organisational ‘sharing & understanding’ workshops○ Joint funding/brokerage○ Secondments of staff across different locations, different roles and different organisations○ Cross-functional/regional committees○ Special projects – bringing together disparate groups
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Graduate Certificate- Shared learning and culture○ Collective response and ownership to crisis○ Facilitated relationship-building○ Mediated interaction○ Retreat bonding

Conclusion

Leveraging personal and professional relationships for strategic advantage is a key part of the armoury of governments and is a new role of network actors and public managers. While clearly relationships are an integral component of networked ways of working, for networked arrangements to be effective they need to be “more than just a cup of tea and a bit of chat”. Indeed, networks and their relationships are highly complex interpersonally based constructs underpinned by higher levels of trust, common understanding and language and shared ideals and goals that require sustained effort and considerable time to establish and maintain.

This paper has shown that there are different kinds of relationships and thus different kinds of relationship intensity requirements. While it is acknowledged that relationship building takes time, it has been demonstrated that there are deliberative strategies that can be employed to ramp up or turbo-charge relationships to meet pressures of network establishment fast-tracked outcomes. A suite of processes and structures have been identified to facilitate this turbo-charging process. Not surprisingly the bulk of these strategies have a strong horizontal or interpersonal orientation based on facilitating trust, understanding, commitment and mutuality.

The paper has also shown that contrary to conventional thinking about the impact of authority on networks, vertical interactions, especially where they relate to imperatives, if applied wisely can also be used to ramp up relationships.

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